

Wayside Inn, (now Scarsdale Library)
Westchester County, Scarsdale
New York.

HABS No. 4-104 HABS
N.Y.

60-SCARD

2

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 4
Southern New York State

Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer,
25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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THE WAYSIDE INN
Corner of Post Road & Wayside Lane
Scarsdale, Westchester Co. N. Y.

Its Location

Although long ago converted to other uses, this building, once an inn, was of so much consequence in stage-coach and tavern times, on account of its convenient situation on the Post Road to New York (known locally as the White Plains Road) that it has retained its old designation. It stands in the shade of several handsome trees and close to the road on the west side of the highway just south of the fine modern High School in the northeastern part of the Village of Scarsdale, in Westchester Co., N. Y. Owned since 1919 by the Village, it now serves as the Public Library.

Its Description

As appears in the drawings, the building has four distinct but connected units. The one at the south end was the earliest. From very definite indications, it possibly dates from the seventeenth century, certainly from the early eighteenth. The next two units are of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively; and the last one, on the west side, is the fireproof stackroom built in the twentieth century. It is all of wood excepting the stackroom which is of hollow tile covered with clapboards. Architecturally, therefore, the building is of peculiar interest.

As viewed by the architects of the present survey, the original or southerly part has the charm of proportion and scale indicative of its early time. It is an example of the simple farmhouse type of construction, a story and a half high without cellar, having a narrow porch with simple chamfered posts across the entire front, and small dormer windows in the roof. It exhibits an early American practice

in frame building construction - the "braced frame" structure -
having walls with large corner and intermediate posts, girts,
braces, plates and sills, all housed, mortised and pegged together,
and many structural members projecting beyond the finished plaster
lines. In some windows the upper sash was fixed; in others both
sash moved. Several sash show wide, crude sash-bars, other of
more nearly modern appearance; some of the glass appears to be
original.

This first unit, its side under the porch still covered with the
original big hand-split and shaped shingles, is in excellent repair,
and as originally designed, with the exception of minor changes in
partitions necessitated by changing use. The cornices and trim
are obviously original; they are very crude and coarse in detail.
The entrance door and hardware are original. The second story shows
the original floor boards.

The middle unit, which might have been added a century later, is
two and a half stories high. Stilted and ungraceful, it was prob-
ably built for purely utilitarian purposes to meet the needs of the
building's occupancy as an inn. It was covered with shingles, and
housed the customary large cooking fireplace and bake ovens, and has
a cellar. In the first and second stories are seen the original,
random, wide oak floor-boards. The white-pine wainscot of the first
and middle units, as well as the stairs and fireplaces, are original
and in good condition.

The northern unit, distinctly more modern, was built perhaps 75
years ago. It has two stories and cellar, with a modern kitchen on
the first floor and bed rooms above. The two latest additions are

covered with clapboards. (From field-notes of the architects of the present survey).

Its Date and History

The original farmhouse is the oldest landmark in the Town of Scarsdale. The approximate date when it was built is determined through descriptions in its title-deeds. Briefly, the abstract of title shows the grant of the Manor of Scarsdale to Caleb Heathcote by King William III on March 21, 1701; the conveyance of the plot on which the house stands from Heathcote to Edmund Tompkins, April 22, 1717; from Tompkins' widow to John Tompkins (of Eastchester), who in 1722 sold to Abraham Hyatt this plot (100 acres) described as "Fox Meadows"; and next, in 1729, conveyance from Hyatt to Thomas Hadden who remained in possession until 1761. The latest published account of the Wayside Inn, written by

Thomas J. Harris, M. D., of Scarsdale, and printed in The Quarterly Bulletin of the Westchester Co. Hist. Soc., Vol. III, no. 4 (Oct., 1927) pp. 3-5,

points out that the boundaries described in the deed to Hyatt are the same as those to Hadden, but the latter's deed mentions "houses, barn, orchards, garden, fences, etc". There being a house on the land in 1729, it is likely from present appearances that it was this one. The date can therefore be placed probably between 1722 and 1729. Scharf, however, in his

Hist. of Westchester Co., Vol. I, p. 664,

says the house was built by "a farmer, Haddon by name". It is nevertheless likely that it is all of 200 years old.

In 1775 it came into the possession of a family of New York tavern-keepers, butchers and drovers named Varian.

During the Revolution, James and Michael Varian who occupied it were ardent patriots, as were also their brothers Richard and Isaac. James was a lieutenant in a company of Westchester Militia. A bronze tablet placed on the house in 1927 by the Westchester Co. Historical Society says it was "a meeting place for Scarsdale patriots and the scene of repeated attacks by British soldiers". This is confirmed by incidents related by Scharf and Dr. Harris.

Col. Jonathan Varian, James's son, conspicuous in the War of 1812, continued to keep the old homestead as a tavern until his death in 1824; and after him a third generation of Varians conducted it as an inn for many years.

Scharf, writing in

1886 (Vol. I, pp. 680-681),

said that the 21-mile-stone, bearing date 1773, was still standing on the Post Road south of the house. "Wayside Inn was the last stopping-place for drovers of cattle from the Ohio towns en route to New York City. They turned the cattle loose in the adjoining pastures, sometimes for several days, to rest here or sell the cattle to dealers. "The pastures of the tavern extended to the north and west of the house, and, until of late years the barns, in which were stored large quantities of fodder for the drovers, stood, as of old, to the west of the tavern itself".

The Varians continued to occupy the Inn down to 1851, when it was bought by Charles Butler whose daughter, the late Emily Butler, presented it to the Village of Scarsdale in 1919. (See Dr. Harris' article, above cited).

It then became the home of the Woman's Club of Scarsdale who at LARGE EXPENSE RESTORED IT.

large expense restored it to its former condition. The open stone terrace on the west was added for this club.

(Ibid)

On November 1, 1927, the Village board of trustees passed a resolution that the "Wayside Cottage" be used as a public library when vacated by the Woman's Club. The stackroom, the one-story wing on the west side, was added in 1928, and in that year the Woman's Club moved into their new building. The reason for this change was stated in the annual report of the Club's president for 1927-28: "Wayside had been given to the Village of Scarsdale for the use of the women by Miss Butler, but the deed of gift did not permit us to add to the little house, so we were forced by our greatly increased membership to seek a home elsewhere".

Written, April 3, 1934 by

Thomas W. Hotchkiss

Thomas W. Hotchkiss

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Approved:

Ar. Drury Foster

Reviewed 1936 by H.C.F.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WAYSIDE INN

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60-SCARD
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An addendum to
Wayside Inn
Scarsdale, New York
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Location:

Post Road and Wayside Lane, Scarsdale, Westchester
County, New York

Present Owner
and Occupant:

Junior League of Scarsdale

Information provided by: John Zukowsky
Architectural Historian
Hudson River Museum
Yonkers, New York 10701
March 1975